

VZCZCXRO9066
PP RUEHDBU RUEHLN RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHTA #1121 1170701
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 270701Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY ASTANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9272
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE 0145
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 1722
RUEHAST/USOFFICE ALMATY
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0319

UNCLAS ASTANA 001121

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/CEN (M. O'MARA)

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#) [XD](#) [KZ](#)

SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: PRESIDENT SIGNALS SUPPORT FOR INVESTMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

¶1. (U) In an April 19 speech before the 6th Annual Eurasia Media Forum in Almaty, President Nursultan Nazarbayev declared that Kazakhstan and its Central Asian neighbors must take some responsibility for reconstructing Afghanistan, in part to help create a "belt of economic well-being" that would serve as a reliable barrier to international terrorists, religious extremists, drug traffickers, and illegal migration. Nazarbayev noted that Kazakhstan has already shipped 3,000 tons of wheat to Afghanistan, as well as 85,000 tons of grain through the UN Global Food Program. The president also said that Kazakhstan is currently developing a "Special Action Program" to increase humanitarian and economic cooperation with Afghanistan and invest in the Afghan economy. He announced that Kazakhstan plans to construct a school in the Samangan region and a hospital in the Bamian region, and will encourage Kazakhstani companies to enter the Afghan market.

¶2. (SBU) On April 26, Talgat Shaldanbai, the desk officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsible for Afghan issues, confirmed to Poloff the ongoing development of a "Special Program to Support the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan." Shaldanbai explained that the program is in the early drafting stage, but will eventually include cultural, humanitarian, investment, and economic support components, as well as plans for providing training and expertise to Afghan institutions. Shaldanbai said that Kazakhstan was "80%" certain that it would build a school in Samangan, and was still working with the Government of Afghanistan on the possibility of building a hospital in the Bamian region.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: Although Kazakhstan's Special Action Program for Afghanistan remains in its very early stages, President Nazarbayev's public call for investment in Afghanistan signals a growing recognition that Central Asia's fate is linked to Afghanistan's fate. Post will continue to encourage and support Kazakhstan's investment and reconstruction initiatives in Afghanistan. End comment.

ORDWAY